Stranded in Hell
A Survival Thriller
Written by Carson Isaacs

Chapter One: Left Behind

Daniel Mercer was thirty-four years old when the island tried to kill him.

He stood a little over six feet tall, lean from years of mechanical work, with dark brown hair usually hidden under a faded cap. A thin scar ran across his left eyebrow from an old accident with a broken wrench. He had always been the kind of man who fixed things — machines, schedules, other people's problems. He was not the kind of man who panicked. But even now, alone on the island, he felt the old doubts lurking under the surface: the memory of the brother he couldn't save, the job he'd lost after a single mistake, the things he wished he'd said to his father before he died. He kept these regrets boxed up, out of sight, but he knew they shaped every choice he made.

That turned out to matter more than anything else.

Daniel worked as a senior maintenance technician for InGen Recovery Solutions, a quiet subsidiary tasked with assessing what remained of the company's old facilities. The assignment was straightforward: spend five days on Isla Nublar, catalogue the structural damage, photograph the site, and file a decommission report. The island had been officially abandoned for over a decade. The jungle had taken back most of it. According to every satellite survey, every sonar reading, and every thermal scan, the island was empty.

The team of six landed on a Tuesday. By Thursday night, they knew the surveys were wrong.

The roar came just after midnight. Daniel was awake in his cot inside the old maintenance depot when the sound rolled down from the northern highlands — deep and resonant, like a bass note that used lungs the size of a car engine. The corrugated walls of the depot shuddered. Dust fell from the ceiling joists.

Nobody slept after that.

The evacuation helicopter arrived the next morning, earlier than scheduled. At the controls was Torres, a compact woman whose reserved demeanor and refusal to share her first name had marked her interactions with the team throughout the assignment. Her efficiency was unmistakable; she had the rotors spinning before the skids fully touched the landing pad, eyes scanning the perimeter with practiced vigilance. "Get in," she commanded, her voice clipped and authoritative, leaving no room for argument or delay.

In the chaos of six people sprinting for the helicopter, no one noticed the wrecked jeep on the south side of the pad — the one with a cracked axle that had slid sideways during the night's storm. Daniel noticed it when the rear bumper caught the strap of his equipment bag and yanked him sideways. He went down hard on the gravel. The bag's metal frame trapped his left leg against the undercarriage.

He heard the helicopter's engine change pitch. The rotors bit harder into the air.

"Wait!" he shouted, scrambling, twisting, pulling at the strap. "Torres! Wait!"

The jeep shifted and he wrenched his leg free, losing his boot in the process. He ran across the pad in one boot and one sock, waving both arms, screaming until his throat burned. The helicopter was already thirty feet up, already banking north, already disappearing into a ceiling of grey cloud.

The sound of the rotors faded.

The jungle filled the silence.

Daniel stood at the edge of the helipad for a long time, breathing hard, staring at the empty sky. Then he turned and looked at the island spread out before him — the broken road winding south through the trees, the ruined rooftops of the visitor center half-swallowed by strangler figs, the northern highlands lost in fog. Somewhere up there, something enormous had roared in the night.

He went back to the maintenance depot and took inventory of what the team had left behind: two liters of water, a first-aid kit, four protein bars, a hand radio with a cracked antenna, a coil of nylon rope, a flashlight with dying batteries, and a laminated map of the park that had faded in the humidity but was still legible if you tilted it toward the light.

He also found a length of steel pipe near the door — part of a collapsed shelving unit. He picked it up, tested its weight in both hands, and decided it was better than nothing.

Then he sat down, studied the map, and started to think.

Chapter Two: The Visitor Center

The map told him two things that mattered.

First, the island's emergency radio transmitter was housed in the main control room, which sat inside the visitor center complex roughly two kilometers south along the main park road.
Second, the T-Rex paddock was located to the east of that road, between the visitor center and the eastern lagoon. Which meant that as long as he stayed on the road and didn't wander east, the largest predator on the island was on the other side of the fence.
If the fence still worked.
He left the depot at mid-morning, when the mist was burning off and the light came down green and diffuse through the canopy. The park road was a ruin — asphalt cracked into irregular plates by roots, the center line long since faded, drainage ditches choked with ferns. But it was still a road, still navigable, and it still ran in a straight line south.
He moved carefully, the steel pipe in his right hand, the laminated map folded in his back pocket and the radio in his shirt pocket. The jungle pressed close on both sides. Vines had pulled down sections of the old perimeter fencing. Somewhere ahead, a bird he didn't recognize made a sound like two stones knocked together.
He was two hundred meters down the road when he found the footprints.
They were in a muddy section where the road dipped, and they were unmistakable: three-toed, each print roughly fifty centimeters long, pressed deep into the soft earth. The stride between them was about a meter and a half. He crouched and looked at the treeline on both sides. Nothing moved. He stood and kept walking, faster now.
The visitor center appeared through a gap in the fig trees — a long glass-and-steel building, most of its exterior panels gone, the roof partially collapsed on the east wing. The atrium's glass ceiling had come down long ago and a small tree was growing up through the wreckage. Vines covered the reception desk. Nature had been patient and thorough.
He found the front doors propped open by a fallen beam. He squeezed through.
Inside, the air was damp and smelled of rot and something faintly metallic. Emergency lighting strips — still running on some residual solar charge, incredibly — pulsed a weak amber along the walls. His footsteps crunched on broken glass and dead leaves. Exhibits lay overturned: a dinosaur skeleton replica on its side, informational displays faded to white ghosts.
He found the stairs to the control room at the back of the atrium, behind a door marked STAFF ONLY. The door was locked. He hit the handle twice with the pipe until the latch broke.
The control room was intact—miraculously, completely intact. The air inside was stale, dense with the odor of old electronics and dust layered thick across the darkened monitors and neglected keyboards. The faint hum of residual power barely registered under the oppressive quiet. He found the emergency transmitter in a cabinet along the north wall, exactly where the schematic on the laminated map indicated. His hands, slightly trembling, pressed the power button; the faint click was startlingly loud in the stillness. The indicator light shifted slowly from red to amber, casting a weak glow that cut through the gloom.
Charging. He'd have to wait.
He dragged a desk against the stairwell door, sat down, and watched the light.
That was when he heard the sound below him in the atrium.
It wasn't the massive bass roar from the highlands. This was different — a sharp, clicking sound, almost rhythmic, like a set of keys dropped on tile. Then again. Then a third time. Then silence.
Then a low, chattering vocalization that raised every hair on his arms.
Raptors. More than one.

Chapter Three: The Raptor Problem

He had read the InGen incident reports before the trip — he always read the background files on his assignments, a habit his supervisor considered excessive and Daniel considered basic professional diligence. The Velociraptor entries had been among the most alarming. Pack hunters. Problem-solvers. Door handles. That had been the famous detail. They could open door handles.
He looked at the stairwell door. He had blocked it with a desk, but there was a gap at the top. He picked up the steel pipe and stood very still, watching the door.
The clicking sound moved across the atrium below. He could track it by the footfalls: light, precise, unhurried. There were at least two animals. Possibly three.
The transmitter's indicator light was still amber.
He exhaled slowly and took stock of his options. The control room had two exits: the stairwell door he'd just blocked, and a window on the west wall that opened onto what had been a service walkway. The walkway connected to the maintenance tunnel that ran under the park road. He knew about the tunnels — he'd seen the schematics. They were how the old park staff had moved equipment around without crossing the dinosaur zones.

The clicking stopped.
He heard something press against the stairwell door.
He moved to the window.
The walkway outside was rusted and he tested his weight on it carefully, one hand on the frame. It held. He climbed out, keeping low, and made his way east along the walkway toward the tunnel access hatch. Below him, through the window he'd just left, he heard the desk scrape across the floor. He didn't look back.
The tunnel hatch was a steel plate set flush into the ground, secured with a bolt lock that had seized with rust. He worked at it with the steel pipe for two excruciating minutes, listening to sounds above him in the visitor center. The bolt finally cracked free and he dropped down into the dark, pulling the hatch closed over his head.
The tunnel was pitch black. He turned on the flashlight. The beam was weak and yellow, but it was enough: a concrete corridor, four feet wide, reinforced with steel ribs, running north-south. Water dripped somewhere ahead. The air smelled of mold and old exhaust. Animal footprints — smaller ones, rodents probably — marked the dust on the floor.
He waited there for twenty minutes, listening at the hatch. Nothing came. Then he moved north through the tunnel, back toward the maintenance depot.
He needed to make a new plan. He was on the wrong side of the raptors.
The transmitter light, when he'd last seen it, was turning from amber toward green.

Chapter Four: Night in the Tunnel
He slept in the tunnel that night — or tried to. The concrete was cold and the flashlight died after an hour, leaving him in absolute darkness. He lay against the east wall with the steel pipe across his chest and listened to the island.
Through the tunnel walls, muffled and distant, he could hear the nocturnal sounds of Isla Nublar. A long, mournful call from the north that he couldn't identify. The shriek of something in the trees that might have been a bird and probably wasn't. And once, around what he guessed was three in the morning, the deep subterranean roar from the highlands — closer now, it seemed, or perhaps he was simply more attuned to it.
He thought about Torres and the helicopter. He didn't blame her. She'd been told the island was empty. When the alarms went off and the others started running, she'd done the rational thing. He would have done the same.
He thought about the transmitter in the control room, sitting on its cabinet, its light turning green in the dark. If he could get back to it, he could reach the mainland emergency frequency — the one InGen's lawyers had insisted remain active for liability purposes even on abandoned sites. Someone would be monitoring it. Someone was always monitoring that frequency.
The problem was the raptors.
He'd seen three of them when he'd risked a look through the atrium window on his way out. They were about two meters long, burnt orange with dark striping along the flanks. They had moved through the atrium with a fluid, almost casual economy — investigating the overturned exhibits, testing the air with their tongues, clearly unconcerned about any threat in the building. They owned that space. They knew it.
He needed to give them a reason to leave.
By the time grey light started filtering down through a drainage grate twenty meters north, he had an idea. It wasn't a good idea. But it was the only one he had.
He ate the last protein bar and started planning.

Chapter Five: Bait
The park's waste management facility was marked on the map near the south end of the maintenance tunnel. InGen had kept it stocked with meat during operations — the freezers would be long dead, the contents long rotted, but the smell would still be there. Preserved, in a way, by the sealed containers. If he could get to the facility, open a few containers, and give the raptors something more interesting than an empty control room, he might be able to clear the visitor center long enough to send a distress call.
It took him forty minutes to reach the waste facility through the tunnel. The smell hit him twenty meters out — thick and organic and deeply unpleasant. He pulled his shirt collar up over his nose and breathed through his mouth.
The facility's tunnel access was a heavy steel door, still sealed. He pried it open with the pipe and the smell intensified dramatically. Inside: a row of industrial containers, their lids swollen and discolored with the internal pressure of years of decomposition. He didn't open them. He didn't need to. He just needed the smell to travel.
He found a ventilation shaft on the south wall of the facility — a round steel duct that fed up toward the surface. He propped it open with a piece of debris. The smell rolled up and out into the afternoon air like a slow tide.
Then he went back north through the tunnel to wait.

He didn't wait long.
Twenty-five minutes after he'd opened the ventilation shaft, he heard movement on the road above the tunnel — first one set of footfalls, then two, then a third. Clicking and chattering. Moving south, quickly, with purpose.
He counted to sixty, very slowly. Then he climbed up through the maintenance hatch nearest the visitor center.
The atrium was empty.
He went up the stairs at a run.
The transmitter's indicator light was green.
He sat down at the console, put on the headset, and keyed the emergency frequency.
"This is Daniel Mercer, InGen Recovery Solutions, maintenance team designate seven. I am stranded on Isla Nublar at the main visitor center. I repeat — I am stranded on Isla Nublar. The site is not clear. The site is active. I need immediate extraction. Please respond."
Static. Then a burst of static. Then a voice — male, surprised, shouting to someone off-mike.
"Recovery seven, this is Pacific Coast Monitoring. We're reading you. Say again your position."
He said it again, slowly and clearly, his hands completely steady on the console.
Outside, somewhere to the south, the raptors screamed.

Chapter Six: The Road North
The extraction would take fourteen hours. That was what the man on the emergency frequency told him after three minutes of relay calls and muffled consultation. Fourteen hours for a Coast Guard helicopter to reach his coordinates from the nearest active base.
He could work with fourteen hours.
He'd done worse on offshore platforms. He'd once spent thirty-six hours on a disabled rig in the North Sea waiting for weather to clear, with nothing but bad coffee and a stuck card game. Fourteen hours was manageable, provided he stayed smart and stayed away from the paddock fences on the east side of the road.
He spent the first two hours back in the maintenance tunnel, moving carefully north. His plan was simple: get to the helipad — the same one Torres had lifted from — and wait there in the open, visible from the air, away from the main jungle.
The tunnel ended a hundred meters south of the helipad. He emerged into late afternoon light, the sky going orange over the western ocean, and moved quickly across the park road.
That was when he saw the T-Rex.
It was standing at the tree line east of the road, thirty meters away. It was facing slightly away from him — its massive head turned toward the highlands, tracking something with its nose. Daniel froze. His heart rate, which he had kept carefully controlled for the past thirty hours, went immediately to a hundred and sixty.
He remembered from the InGen files that the Tyrannosaur relied heavily on motion detection. He'd also read that this was probably an oversimplification. But it was all he had.
He did not move.
The animal was extraordinary. Even in his current state — exhausted, dehydrated, one boot missing, gripping a steel pipe that seemed suddenly and deeply inadequate — he could not help noticing that. It was at least twelve meters from snout to tail tip. Its skin was a dark olive with paler striping along the flanks. Its head swung back around, scanning, and he had one vertiginous moment of direct eye contact — or what felt like it — before the enormous head continued its arc back toward the highlands.
Something had its attention up there. Not him. Something in the forest.
He took three very slow steps backward, toward the helipad gate.
The T-Rex moved north into the trees without looking back.
Daniel exhaled for what felt like the first time in an hour. Then he continued to the helipad.
He arrived at the pad as the last of the daylight disappeared. He dragged two signal flares from the emergency locker on the pad's north wall — still good, miraculously — and set them at the south corners of the pad. He didn't light them yet. Not until he heard rotors.
He sat with his back against the locker, the steel pipe across his knees, and watched the dark treeline.
Thirteen hours.

Chapter Seven: The Last Night
The night came in layers.
First the insects — a rising chorus of chirps and trills that filled the dark like static. Then the deeper calls from the forest, the unidentifiable sounds he'd learned to categorize as: dangerous-but-distant, dangerous-and-approaching, or unknown. Most fell

into the first category. He was getting better at this.
Around midnight the rain returned, a warm tropical downpour that turned the helipad into a shallow pool and soaked him to the skin within minutes. He didn't move. Cold and wet was uncomfortable. Moving in the dark to find shelter was potentially fatal. He stayed where he was, one hand on the emergency locker, and let it rain.
The pack of raptors passed within forty meters of the helipad at roughly two in the morning. He saw their eyes first — reflected light from some distant source, a faint gleam in pairs moving through the undergrowth. He counted three pairs of eyes, maybe four. They moved south along the treeline, not interested in the helipad, not interested in him. Following the food smell south, still. Or maybe just patrolling their territory, which apparently included everything.
He thought about his crew. Torres and the five technicians on that helicopter. They would have landed, made their reports, discovered he wasn't on the manifest. There would have been confusion, then alarm, then the slow bureaucratic machinery of a missing-persons report. The emergency frequency call had cut through all of that. By now they would know he was alive and in contact. That mattered to him more than it probably should have — not for the rescue, which was coming regardless, but for some quieter reason he didn't examine too closely.
He thought about the island itself. He'd been sent here to write a decommission report, to assess damage and fill out forms and recommend timelines for demolition. That report had always seemed like a formality — the conclusion was foregone, the island was a liability, tear it down and be done with it.
But the island was not dead. The island was profoundly, irreducibly alive, in a way that had nothing to do with the original park or its failed ambitions. Whatever InGen had done here, the jungle had continued its own slower project, building something complex and layered and self-sustaining around the ruins. The raptors were not escaped exhibits. They were residents. They belonged to the island now in a way the park's architects never had.
He didn't know what to do with that thought. He filed it away for later.
Around four in the morning, a dilophosaur appeared at the south edge of the helipad. It was smaller than he'd expected — about the size of a large dog — with the distinctive twin crests on its skull catching the faint ambient light. It watched him for a long, still moment, its throat working silently. Then it turned and disappeared into the ferns.
He'd been afraid of it. He'd gripped the pipe and measured the distance with his eyes. But it had just looked at him. Just a look, and then gone.
Five hours left.

Chapter Eight: Extraction

He heard the rotors at 6:47 in the morning.
He was awake — he'd been awake for the last two hours, watching the sky lighten from black to grey to the first pale suggestion of blue. When the sound came in from the northwest, he was on his feet before he consciously registered what it was.
He pulled both signal flares from the locker and struck the first one. Red light flooded the helipad, throwing hard shadows across the cracked asphalt. He held it above his head and turned toward the sound.
The helicopter came in low and fast, a Coast Guard HH-60 running with all lights on — white strobes, red nav lights, the brilliant landing lights blazing down. It swept over the helipad once, banking hard, and he saw a figure in the door lean out and look at him.
Then it came around again, slower, descending.
The rotor wash hit him like a wall. He kept the flare high and moved to the pad's center, away from the locker, watching the skids come down. The landing was hard and fast — professional, urgent. The door slid open and a paramedic in an orange jumpsuit jumped out, already moving toward him.
"Mercer? Daniel Mercer?"
"Yes," he said.
"Anyone else on the island?"
"No. Just me."
The paramedic took the flare from his hand — it was still burning — and handed it to a second crew member, then put a hand on Daniel's shoulder and guided him toward the open door. He got in. The door slid shut. The helicopter lifted.
He looked out the porthole window as they climbed. The island fell away beneath him — the helipad, the broken road, the visitor center with its collapsed glass ceiling, the jungle pressing in on all sides. The river catching morning light. The highlands to the north still wrapped in cloud. Somewhere down there, in the green, the island continued its slow work.
A crew member pressed a water bottle into his hands. He drank most of it in one pull.
"You okay?" the paramedic asked.

He thought about the question. About the raptor eyes in the rain. About the T-Rex standing at the treeline, enormous and indifferent. About the dilophosaur that had simply looked at him and left.
“Yeah,” he said. “I’m okay.”
The island disappeared into the clouds below.
He drank the rest of the water.

Epilogue: Hell Follows Home
Daniel Mercer had been back in Portland for three weeks when the first signs appeared.
The rain had been relentless that autumn, turning the streets into shallow rivers and the sky into a perpetual gray shroud. He’d rented a small bungalow on the edge of the city, a place with creaky wooden floors and a backyard that backed onto a patch of overgrown woods. It was quiet. Too quiet, sometimes. He’d wake in the night to the sound of dripping water from the eaves, his heart racing, convinced for a split second that he was back in the tunnel under Isla Nublar.
The incident report was filed, the resignation accepted. InGen had paid him a quiet settlement—enough to cover the therapy sessions he hadn’t yet scheduled and the new boots he’d bought to replace the one lost on the helipad. He spent his days walking the neighborhood, fixing small things around the house: a leaky faucet, a loose door hinge. Old habits. He avoided the news, avoided calls from former colleagues. Torres had left a voicemail once, apologizing in her clipped way. He hadn’t called back.
The call from Dr. Elaine Voss came on a Thursday afternoon. He was in the kitchen, staring out at the rain-smeared window, a mug of bad coffee cooling in his hands. She introduced herself, asked her questions, played the recording of the highland roar. It matched. At the end, she invited him back to the island with a research team.
He looked out at the rain for a while.
“What would you be trying to learn?” he asked.
“Everything,” she said. “We’d be trying to learn everything.”
He thought about it. About the map, the river, the jungle alive and indifferent. “Give me a few weeks,” he said. “I’ll think about it.”
He hung up and set the phone on the counter. The rain drummed harder on the roof. He stepped to the back door, peering into the yard. Something had been digging near the fence line the night before—probably raccoons or a neighbor’s dog. The holes were shallow, irregular, like claws testing the soil. He made a mental note to fill them in tomorrow.
That night, the sounds started.
It began with the insects—or what sounded like insects. A rising chorus of chirps and trills from the woods, filling the dark like static. He sat up in bed, the sheets tangled around him, listening. Portland had its share of nocturnal noise, but this was different: deeper, more rhythmic. Dangerous-but-distant, he categorized it automatically. He was getting better at this, even off the island.
He lay back down, but sleep didn’t come. Around midnight, the rain returned, soaking the yard into mud. He didn’t move. Cold and wet was uncomfortable back there; here, it was just weather.
The clicking came at roughly two in the morning. Sharp, almost rhythmic, like a set of keys dropped on tile. Then again. Then silence.
He gripped the edge of the bed, his heart rate climbing. It was outside, in the yard. He told himself it was branches scraping the fence, or wind through the trees. But he knew better. He’d heard that sound in the atrium, tracking him through the glass and steel.
He slipped out of bed, barefoot, and moved to the window. The backyard was a black void under the rain, but he saw the eyes first—reflected light from the porch lamp, a faint gleam in pairs moving through the undergrowth. One pair. Low to the ground, deliberate.
Not a raccoon.
Hell had followed him home.
The realization hit him like rotor wash: the helicopter. The chaos of extraction, the open door, the rush to lift off. Something small, clever, could have slipped aboard in the confusion—hidden in the cargo hold, or under a seat. A stowaway from the island, patient and opportunistic. The InGen files had mentioned Utahraptors in the old manifests—larger cousins to the velociraptors, more solitary, but just as lethal. Pack hunters or not, they solved problems. They adapted.
He backed away from the window, his mind racing. The phone was in the kitchen. He could call Voss, or emergency services, or anyone. Explain the impossible. But it was too late.
The back door handle rattled—testing, turning.
He lunged for the hallway, but the door burst inward with a splinter of wood. The shape was a blur in the dark: two meters long, burnt orange with dark striping, its claws skittering on the floorboards. It chattered low, a sound that raised every hair on his

arms, and leaped.

Daniel twisted, grabbing for the kitchen counter, but the Utahraptor was faster. Its sickle claw hooked his leg, yanking him down. He screamed once as teeth sank into his shoulder, hot and tearing. He fought—fists, elbows, everything he had—but it was like fighting the island itself: relentless, alive, indifferent.

The raptor ripped him apart in seconds, efficient and thorough. Blood sprayed the walls, pooled on the floor, mixing with the rain tracked in from the yard.

By morning, all that remained was a bloody mess—scattered remnants amid overturned furniture, the phone off its hook, buzzing with a dial tone.

The rain continued to fall, washing the yard clean. The woods went silent again.

Portland had its own predators now.